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Ministry of Advanced Education

GOVERNMENT APPROVES NEW PHD DEGREE AT SFU

BURNABY – The Province has approved a new doctoral degree in gerontology at Simon Fraser University, Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell announced today.

Gerontology is the study of the social, psychological and biological aspects of aging and is a rapidly developing field due to the growth in population aging. The four-year doctoral program will coincide with the two current streams of study in SFU's gerontology master's program - aging and environment, and health and aging.

"Post-secondary education plays an important role in ensuring there are highly trained people to fill the many positions that will be left vacant by the wave of retiring baby boomers," said Coell, who approves all new degrees in B.C. "With this new degree program we are also ensuring support for B.C. society in dealing with aging issues."

Students will be required to complete a minimum of five graduate courses in gerontology, including two in methods/statistics and one in required theory. To graduate, students must also take two comprehensive exams and write and defend a dissertation. Graduates will be prepared for academic or professional careers in leadership, research, and policy.

"This doctoral program will help to train a new generation of gerontologists needed to respond to the needs of rapid population aging in B.C. and Canada as the baby boomers move into their golden years," said Dr. Andrew Wister, SFU department chair. "It is a cutting-edge program, due to the interdisciplinary training from both basic and applied scientific perspectives."

Simon Fraser University's Gerontology Research Centre will benefit from the doctorate, giving PhD students an enriched educational and training experience and opportunities to apply their skills in a research setting.

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Since 2001, more than 22 new undergraduate and graduate degrees have been approved at Simon Fraser University, including five PhD degrees, seven master's degrees and 10 bachelor's degrees. These new programs are helping to improve B.C.'s competitiveness and productivity.

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